The image shows the front cover of an antique book. The cover is decorated with a traditional marbled paper pattern, featuring a dark brown base with intricate, swirling veins of red and blue, and numerous small, light-colored circular spots. The spine of the book, visible on the left, is bound in a plain, dark brown material. A small, rectangular white paper label is affixed to the lower-left corner of the cover. The label contains the following text: "5540a", ".65", and "No. 1-8".

5540a
.65
No. 1-8

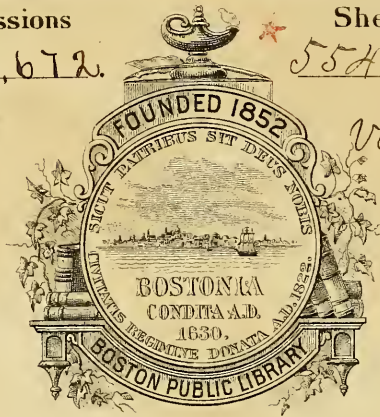
**Research
Library**

Accessions

273,672.

Shelf No.

5540a.65



Vol. 2

Received: Feb. 2, 1880.

*dp. 557
Duplicate not catalogued*

SERMON,

AT

THE INSTALLATION

OF

REV. GEORGE W. BRIGGS,

AS PASTOR OF

THE FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM,

BY REV. MR. MORISON, OF MILTON.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY REV. DR. FLINT, OF SALEM.

WITH NOTICES

OF THE FIRST CHURCH AND ITS MINISTERS,

BY A MEMBER.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT

THE INSTALLATION

OF

REV. GEORGE W. BRIGGS,

AS PASTOR OF

THE FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM,

JANUARY 6, 1853.

BY JOHN HOPKINS MORISON,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN MILTON.

S A L E M :

GAZETTE PRESS, 191 ESSEX STREET.

1853.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Boston Public Library

SERMON.

I PETER, v. 2—4. Feed the flock of God which is among you. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

The great office of the Christian ministry is to feed the flock of God, and thus sustain within their souls the divine life which may fit them for his service here, and his kingdom hereafter.

I. But, in order to do this, we must believe that men have souls. In looking around, we see every one busy and anxious. Trains of merchandise come and go. Ships, laden with the products of every clime, pass from shore to shore, followed by the ardent wishes and expectations of men. Wharves are extended. Houses are built, and furnished with every luxury that can please the palate or the eye. Costly delicacies and garments are sought, with endless labor, from all the remote quarters of the globe, to feed and adorn these mortal bodies. Everything tells of what is outward and material. Everywhere

men are devoting themselves to it with all their energies of thought and life. Speak to them of the soul and its immortal wants; they hastily assent to what you say, and hurry on, as if nothing were worthy of their serious attention but outward, material, interests and pursuits. The young have their pleasures, the middle aged their business, and the old cling with a more desperate tenacity to the things of time, as the hour approaches when time shall be with them no longer. In short, all that we see around us, in the habits, pursuits, and conversation of men, savors of an exclusive devotion to what is outward and material. Churches, indeed, are found; but they are closed six days in the week, and, when opened, their services do not come home to the hearts of the worshippers with the same sense of substantial interest and reality, that they feel when engaged in their other pursuits.

Yet, underneath all this show of our superficial activity, are the great and solemn realities of life. The heavens, bending over us, an image of God's protecting Providence, and telling of his glory and his handy-work, do not seem to find in the hearts of men, any response to their profoundest teachings. The words of eternal life, which Jesus declared, seem to fall upon the multitude, like hail upon the frozen earth, unable to penetrate its depths, or to find any

life there to feed and sustain. But, could the bosom of society be laid open, and all its secret workings for this one hour—its silent prayers and curses, the throbs of joy and pain, the undivulged crimes and struggling virtues, the pangs of remorse, the aspirations of faith and hope, for this one hour,—be laid open to us, never again could this smooth, empty, superficial world be to us what it now is. For, underneath these outward forms are agonies of soul, compared with which bodily tortures are but as flowery beds, and inward joys, which transcend all that the noisy world knows of pleasure, as far as God and eternity transcend our earthly time and sense. There, are sorrows too deep for utterance, and passions leading on to crimes at which the very stars might grow pale. There, perhaps in the souls of the guiltiest of our race, may be the germs of virtues never to be born; emotions, principles of duty, which might be sanctified to the holiest ends, and love which can be satisfied with nothing short of the love of God;—all cut off like an untimely birth, lost forever, for want of seasonable encouragement and support. The vision, seen in the Apocalypse, of angels and dragons, saints and devils, of seas turned to blood, and the heavens dissolved in fire, of the holy city coming down from God as a bride adorned for the marriage, and of the bottomless pit, where the beast and the false prophet

shall be tormented forever and ever, is but a shadowing forth of what we at this moment might behold, if we could lift the veil, and see as God sees, into the souls and secret thoughts of men. At this moment, in a spiritual sense, men are dying, and men are being born. To some, a new heaven is just opening; to others, scenes of darkness and despair. Here, the sinful soul is struggling up into life, and there the pure spirit is sinking down into sin. One timely word, one act of Christian sympathy or warning, may save him yet. O, feed the flock of God,—feed these immortal souls, and, amid such infinite abundance, leave them not to perish with hunger.

For, what we see is not the whole of life. In the soul are capacities and wants which cannot be satisfied by any earthly food. In the dwelling near you, everything may wear the appearance of tranquillity and peace. Yet, connected with it, may be a story of deeper tragedy than ever yet was enacted on any stage, or of a sublimer triumph than ever swelled aloft in a national Te-Deum. There, life's great end, for this world and the world to come, has been gained or lost. There, weak and sinful man has awakened to a consciousness of the divine love, and lived in daily communion with Christ and with God. There, while all without is calm, and friends are near, and hopes seem bright, and virtue easy, and no great in-

terests at stake, another, through misdeeds which no one near him suspects, is cutting himself off from the very mercies of God, and giving himself up relentlessly to the horrors of utter ruin and despair. And there, at this very hour, while the light of heaven rests so peacefully upon him, another, in the conflicts of his own breast, is settling, as, sooner or later, every human being must, the great question whose consequences, for weal or woe to him, shall reach beyond the grave. To you, to himself, he may seem only a man of society or of pleasure. But to the Omniscient God and to his own future self, he is far more than that. He has a soul to be saved or lost. He has misgivings, questionings, strugglings, and eternity alone shall unfold their momentous results. He has faculties which cry out for the living God, and which find their life and their support only in Him.

Now, the great design of the Christian ministry, the great design of life, is, to call out these inward powers; to make distinct and real, as objects of thought and affection, these unseen but eternal interests; to lay open before men the endless provisions which God has made for their spiritual advancement, and thus feed them with the bread of life. And standing, as we do, in the presence of God and of these immortal spirits, looking through the perishing form to the imperishable soul within, through the

shadows of time to the realities of eternity, what to us are all the distinctions of this little life? The places of labor and business, of feasting and of mourning, of poverty and of wealth, are but fields in which God's flock may range, and in which, through the heavenly food with which we are to feed them, whatever is pure and holy may spring up into life, and ripen for eternity.

We are, first of all, to have faith in the soul, in God, and in all the rich gifts which He in his mercy has made, to provide for its immortal desires and wants. On this point I have already spoken.

II. In the second place, we are to make use of all these gifts of love and mercy to awaken and sustain a divine life in the soul, and thus to feed the flock of God. This is the great end of the Christian ministry. By the terrors of the law, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, by the boundless munificence of God's mercy towards us now, and the promises of a richer glory hereafter, by the teachings, the labors, and the sufferings of Christ, by the holy and affecting emblems of his love, by all that is to be hoped of inward comfort here, or happiness hereafter, we are to awaken and sustain a divine life in the souls of our people. In all our walks, in our secret prayers, our private studies, and our public instructions, we are to labor for this end. Living in Christ, till his great

truths and his divine life quicken our thoughts, we are to come, our hearts burning within us, to impress on others the truths, the precepts of duty, the divine benignity and love, which have so stirred within us all the better elements of our nature. The modes of address which we are to adopt are as various as God's mercies or man's opportunities and gifts. In them all we must recognise the powerful agency of the divine spirit, co-working with us, and essential to our success.

1. But, to select from the many topics here suggested, the preacher is to feed his flock, first, by instructing them. He is to teach the great doctrines of our religion. Its truths he is to unfold with clearness and force, with precision of thought, and with that breadth of wisdom which becomes him who stands up to speak in the name of Jesus. The principles of sound common sense, in their application to religious doctrines and duties, must form the groundwork of all his instructions. He therefore must have clear, strong convictions of his own. He must have for himself distinct, well-arranged, consistent views upon a subject, before he undertakes to preach about it to others. A mass of well-compacted thought is to reach from the beginning to the end of the discourse, like the vertebral column in the human body, and, like that, with a thousand nerves of sensation radiat-

ing from it into every part, till the whole substance, instinct with life, glows, and warms, and thrills with a true and healthful emotion. We sometimes forget that the nerves which keep the heart alive, come down from the brain. We forget that it is truth alone, coming down from the intellect to the heart, that feeds and sustains the religious sensibilities and affections. Our Saviour never lost sight of this great fact. He moved men's souls and changed their whole natures by revealing to them truths which enter the heart through the mind, calling out its mightiest energies, kindling from soul to soul a fire which shall not be quenched till it has consumed every unhallowed thought and passion, and brought the whole world into subjection to itself. We forget what an immortal, self-perpetuating life there is in a great and sacred truth. Old superstitions flee in terror from before it. Old abuses fade away, and wrongs, fortified behind the laws and prejudices of centuries, leave their strongholds at its approach, and cease from off the earth.

Those truths which Christ, speaking as one having authority, first uttered in his Sermon on the Mount with such terrible distinctness and calmness, have been traversing the world with more than kingly power, from that day to this, exalting the humble, overthrowing the proud, erecting amid mightiest em-

pires a throne mightier than theirs, approaching oppressions hallowed by the reverence of ages, and, like death in the chambers of the great, by a touch turning them into dust, while from their ashes they raise up new elements of life and of spiritual power to go forth in their royal progress, conquering and to conquer. In our age of shallow excitement, of religious diletanteism, when it is more a crime to offend the æsthetic sensibilities of men than their reverence for truth, and when, among those of a ruder culture, religion is made to consist so much in the powerful emotions, got up by overwrought nerves and heated imaginations, we forget how much our Saviour rested on the calm, distinct, authoritative enunciation of truth. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." His preaching has not one of the elements which distinguish the popular preaching of our day. It is too simple, too didactic, too calm, too much overloaded and weighed down by the massive solidity of its instructions, too uncompromising in its principles of truth, and their application to life.

But, nevertheless, here is an example which it is well for us to remember. We must not lose our confidence in the efficacy of religious truth, calmly, affectionately, and earnestly addressed to the reason and conscience of our hearers. We have endeavored

to interest men sometimes by ingenious discussions, by appeals to their fancy or their passions. But after a time, under this sort of preaching, the great ends of religious worship are forgotten. Audiences come to church to be entertained or excited. Failing in that, they go home dissatisfied. They find other places which answer their purpose better. The exciting literature which is furnished to their hands, the theatre, the concert room, are more entertaining to them. They lose their interest in the church. The pews become empty. The voice of the preacher is as that of a sparrow alone upon the house top. Or if he has attempted to keep up with the times, as it is called; if he has striven to rival these other sources of entertainment; if he has borrowed his topics from the newspapers, his illustrations from the popular novels, and his emotions from the concert room; or if, in imitation of them, he seeks more to excite the feelings than to instruct the minds of his hearers, and employs the words and images of Scripture as rhetorical figures to keep up the attention of his audience, rather than as messages from God to enforce by their authority the great doctrines of salvation, then, if he have a pleasant voice and a lively fancy, and especially if his choir is properly supplied from the prevailing music of the day, he may draw together large and fashionable congregations for a time. But, by

and by, even these resources fail. The religious sensibilities, so constantly heated by his eloquence, are at length burnt out. For, no emotions, but those which are awakened by the truth and kept alive by healthful exercise in the performance of duty, can last year after year with a constantly increasing freshness and power.

Religious instruction, then, is to be the first great means of sustaining a religious life, and of keeping up a constant interest in the services of the sanctuary. I know not how it may be in this particular society, but in many places, the ignorance of people on religious subjects, and particularly in regard to the Bible, is humiliating and disheartening. They need to be instructed almost in the first elements of our religion. Clear, substantial thought, unfolding the principles of our faith, its evidences and history, its doctrines, and even its common facts, will come to many of our congregations almost with the charm of novelty. It may be distasteful at first to those who have been accustomed to less substantial and more highly seasoned food. But the taste for it may gradually be cultivated, and a congregation may be educated by their minister to enjoy as well as to profit by this most nutritive kind of preaching.

For, it is not to be all dry instruction. Truths, which come to the soul laden with the hopes of im-

mortality, and appeal to all that is best within us, must find their way to the heart and keep alive our holiest longings and desires. Let the truth of man's future existence, for example, be made plain to the understanding, freed from the difficulties which lie in the way of an assured and hearty conviction, and brought home to him as a personal matter, as a great and awful reality which he cannot escape, and this cold and distant doctrine will become an element of vital warmth and power. So with all the great doctrines of Christianity. They appeal directly to our dearest personal interests, and in them are involved the weightiest considerations that can address themselves to the mind or heart.

They are not, then, to be presented, like the principles of metaphysical science, as abstractions floating afar off in the regions of speculative intelligence. They are, indeed, the loftiest subjects that can engage the human intellect, and we cannot exercise our minds too vigorously upon them. But they are matters of faith as well as of knowledge. Though, in their application to us, they are perfectly plain, they also rise above the reach of our human intelligence, and repose, in all their peaceful grandeur, within the veil of God's infinity. It becomes every preacher to recognize this fact. In speaking on any religious doctrine or duty, we stand under the shadow of His wing.

The simple duty, which we, as ministers of Christ, would press upon you, by the sentiment of moral obligation binds you to the footstool of the throne, and all the powers of the world to come are pledged to its support. In these things we hold the wisdom of God clearly, but also in a mystery. The duty of prayer, for example, is plain enough. The reasons why we should pray, the manner in which we should pray, may be taught clearly enough, and the whole matter brought within the scope of our theological science. But the preacher must not stop here; he must recognize the mystery that lies beyond, as we lift our souls in prayer to Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, who knows our inmost thoughts, and with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The evidences of Christianity, the reasonings by which the *a priori* objections to it as a supernatural revelation may be removed, together with its leading principles and facts, may all be presented with perfect clearness to the common understanding, so far as the wants of the intellect are concerned; and yet they are all shaded round with the mysteries of heaven and of eternity. It becomes us, therefore, always, on these subjects, to speak with modesty and reverence, if we would be true to our theme or perform our best office as religious teachers in feeding the flock of God. There is sometimes a

flippant self-sufficiency in urging even the right arguments, which shocks the religious sensibilities, and shakes one's religious faith even while it satisfies his understanding. The sentiment of reverence is chilled, though the mind is convinced. It is as if one, by some decisive experiment, should prove that we have power to move our hand in a particular way, and by the very act of proof should destroy or paralyze the nerves by which we move it. This is a common fault in the treatment of the Christian evidences and the explanation of passages of Scripture. We do not recognize the infinite depth which lies beyond all that we can clearly know.

This union of clearness and of mystery, the application of sound, common-sense principles to moral and religious subjects, while at the same time we recognise in connection with them the workings of a power beyond the comprehension of our minds, is what distinguishes the teachings of the pulpit from those of the lecture room. In one case, the instructions are purely scientific ; in the other, the element of faith mingles with them. The anatomist, for example, lectures on the hand ; he lays bare its bones, nerves and muscles, shows their relation to one another and to the whole body, and there his lecture ends. But just at that point the religious teacher takes up his work, makes use of all that he has demonstrated, and shows

that underneath what he has disclosed, is a principle of life which no man ever yet has been able to explain, reaching back to the source of all life, and borrowing from Him that which gives to the fingers their cunning, which animates the human form, and which underlies all science as its only sure support. Here, the lecture becomes a sermon. The sentiment of reverence and faith is super-added to our scientific knowledge. We feel, as in the presence of God, that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. The world of sense is animated by the spirit of God. And science, while she teaches the Christian minister, kneels as she lays her offering at the feet of Jesus. She recognises in him who raised the dead and spoke the words of eternal life, a knowledge and an authority beyond all that she can hope ever to reach.

This is one sort of teaching, which, in its treatment of all the great subjects of our religion through the intellect, is to keep alive our religious feelings, and help to cherish a divine life in the soul.

2. But there is another class of instructions, which, through our moral nature, by its appeals to the sense of duty, is to perform an important part in educating our religious natures. Any one, who reads the Gospels for the first time with a view to this, will perhaps be surprised to find how large a portion of our Saviour's instructions is taken up with our social and

moral duties. Here, in the faithfulness of our lives, is the great test of our fidelity to him and of our acceptance with God.

With the simplicity and firmness, then, which becomes his ministers, we are to lift up our voice against every prevailing sin,—every form of selfishness, dishonesty and oppression,—against every unhallowed passion or intemperate appetite and habit. The evil may be enthroned in the strong holds of society; it may be intimately connected with the pecuniary interests of our hearers; it may be embodied in some permanent institution, and the sanctions of human law may demand our countenance and support for that which the law of God condemns and forbids; it may be some vice made respectable by the social position of its advocates, which cannot be attacked without offending those who are more open to the sense of shame than to the sense of wrong, and who under the sting of reproach are ready to brand as fanatical whatever would abridge their dangerous excesses. Still, if it is a sin, there must be no parleying with it here. No soft terms are to be applied; no half-excuses for the sin and half-excuses for meddling with it, as if that also were a sin, are to be allowed here. This place is consecrated to God; and human interests, predilections and passions, are never here to turn aside or dull the edge of his commands. This

man is set apart as a minister of Jesus Christ,—your minister, but God's minister also, and bound by the most solemn obligations not to shun to declare unto you *all* the counsel of God. There must be no compromises here between his feelings of kindness and respect for you and his allegiance to God. It may grieve him more than you can ever know, to speak to you on some subjects with the plainness and severity which become his sacred office ; but there is no alternative. Necessity is upon him ; yea, woe is unto him if he preach not the gospel. For that purpose, you have invited him here and now set him apart with prayer and solemn religious services. And with simplicity and godly sincerity he is here to have his conversation among you as one who must render to God an account of his ministry. And you also, let it be remembered, must render to God an account of the use you make of his ministry.

There is sometimes an apologetic way of uttering unwelcome truths in the pulpit, which degrades both the minister and his office. I remember a very young man sent by a college officer to a company of students who were violating the laws of the institution. "I deliver the message," he said, "because I have been requested to ; but I wish you to understand that I have no sympathy with it." A shout of derision was the only reply which he received in this attempt

to secure their favor in the performance of a disagreeable duty. Sometimes, there is something like this in the pulpit. The duty is urged, because it is too plain to be disregarded, and perhaps because some members of the congregation whom it might be dangerous to offend, insist upon it. But there is something in the manner of the preacher which shows, that, though he delivers the message, his heart is not in it. He would break its force in the delivery. He would secure to himself the approbation of those whom his words may condemn. But the very persons whose favor he would thus conciliate, look upon him, or, at least, upon his conduct, with disgust and contempt. A calm, firm, manly utterance of whatever we feel it our duty to utter, is the only way to secure the confidence and respect even of those to whom our words may come most unpleasantly.

I do not believe that there is the danger in this branch of ministerial duty that is usually supposed. I believe that our congregations generally are willing to allow to their minister all the liberty that he can rightfully ask. But they do not allow him to be a monomaniac, constantly iterating and reiterating certain peculiar views, simply because he knows them to be disagreeable to his hearers. He must rightly divide the word of truth. Nor do they allow him to mix up his personal feelings of anger, indignation, or

scorn, with the solemn message that he is to deliver with love and with sorrow, as a minister of Christ. Here is the way in which most of us fail in the performance of this difficult and delicate part of our duty. If there is ever a time when we should speak with calmness, with gentleness, and with the most tender sensibilities as well as with firmness, it is when we are uttering words which we know will cross the prejudices of our people, or rebuke their conduct and awaken uncomfortable feelings. Yet precisely on these points we are apt to speak with undue excitement, and with what seems like an angry impatience. It is, as if a physician in performing a painful operation, where his utmost gentleness and the most delicate care are needed, should allow himself to become excited and impatient, and with his rash hand should harshly tear away among the inflamed and excruciatingly sensitive nerves,—thus, in what at best is painful enough, inflicting so much gratuitous suffering, and probably defeating the whole purpose of the operation.

We talk of the sternness and severity of the old Hebrew prophets. Yet, let any one read the account of Nathan, when he went to rebuke David, for a most outrageous crime. It was by his gentleness and by the affecting images under which he placed his sins before him, not less than by his severity, that he

reached his heart and subdued his whole nature. Well might David exclaim, "I have sinned against the Lord," and pour out those words of penitential grief and trust, which for thirty centuries have brought their holy comfort and relief to souls burdened by a sense of guilt, under the merciful chastisements of God.

This is the spirit in which we are to speak to our people of their sins. By our tender, affectionate intercourse, and our generous sympathy with them, we are to gain their confidence and love. And the same kindness that we show in private is to mark our public conduct. In the pulpit, not less than in the chamber of sickness and grief, the warmth and earnestness of our sympathy should be felt.

There are preachers who are always peculiarly smart and epigrammatic, when they approach the sins of their people. They apply the lash with such skill, that there is a sort of pleasure in witnessing the operation. There is sometimes a movement through the church, as of admiration, to see, how the preacher lays it on. Yet nobody is hurt, though every man's neighbor is expected to be. And sometimes, with an adroitness worthy of a worse cause, the sinner is tricked out in discreditable garments and held up to general indignation and scorn. But such preaching, though it may answer the ends of the satirist, never

reaches the heart, and never yet converted a soul to God. It is not the way in which we are to deal with our weak or sinful brethren. The pulpit is not to be turned into a whipping-post, or a pillory, even for the most hardened offenders. Instead of leading every man to think of his neighbor or to admire the rhetorical skill displayed in such exhibitions, the true minister of Jesus will rather lead every man to look into his own heart, and, in the light of God's truth, see the evil thoughts and motives which he has cherished there, till he is ready to smite upon his breast and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

But in order to have this power over weak, tempted, sinful men, we must sympathize with them in their weakness, in their temptations, and even in their sins. The severity of our rebuke will be all the more effective, because it is dissolved into tears by the tenderness of our love. And why should we not look on them with tenderness? These sinful, worldly-minded, hardened offenders, have their sorrows and their retributions even now. It matters not how prosperous they may seem, nor how sorely their cruelty or injustice may press upon the happiness of others. The heaviest blow that they can strike, must always fall upon themselves. The deepest curse which they inflict is that which settles down, as the curse of God, on their own souls. Follow them not

with anger, unless it be with the anger of Jesus, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. Follow them, not with anger, not with execrations or with bitterness of reproach ; but with tenderness, such as mothers feel for their erring and sinful children. They may not listen to you now. But follow them with kind words and acts, or with a forbearance that never grows impatient or weary. Follow them with your prayers, and the yearnings of a heart longing for their redemption. It may be that your ministry will not be lost. In a parable which I have somewhere read, of an angel who by his gentleness had succeeded in saving just such a hardened, sinful man as one of these, it is written, "that other angels did look up with loving and admiration into the visage of this angel on his return ; and he told the younger and more zealous of them, that whenever they would descend into the gloomy vortex of the human heart, under the softness and serenity of their voice and countenance, its turbulence would subside. 'Beloved,' said the angel, 'there are portals that open to the palm branches we carry, and that close at the flaming sword.' "

I have spoken of the great design of the Christian ministry, and of some of the means by which that design may be accomplished. We are to awaken men to a sense of the reality of divine things, and

to feed within them a divine life. Christ has broken the silence of ages to call out in man spiritual powers which had not yet been roused to a consciousness of their own life. He saw before him fields ripe for the harvest. We have entered into his labors. It is not the work of a day or of a year, but of centuries, that lies before us. We must not be discouraged. We have for our helpers all the solemn changes of life and death—whatever touches the deepest emotions of the heart, whatever through a sense of human frailty or of weariness and satiety, would awaken longings for God, for immortality and heaven. We have as our helper the everlasting Gospel of Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, yet adapting itself to every variety of human experience, overawing the proud, breathing its accents of love and mercy for the penitent, offering rest to the weary and heavy-laden, and uplifting the souls of the dying with hopes that bring the light of heaven to dawn upon them. We have as our helper Jesus Christ himself, present now among his people, making intercession for them to the Father, and ministering to their wants. We have with us the spirit of God, renewing and sanctifying the souls of them who meekly submit themselves to Him. We have with us the example of all those who have made life beautiful and death glorious by the beauty of their holiness and

the steadfastness of their faith. We have with us the sympathy and prayers of those faithful ones whom God is raising up as his ministers and agents in all the various walks of life. We have with us the young, whose minds have not yet been chilled by the bleak atmosphere of the world. We have with us the human soul, which cannot find its home or its rest amid the perishing things of time, which rises from sun to sun, from world to world, and then in the profounder depths of its own nature holds communion with God, and draws from him a life which shall outlive the stars.

In our great work, in the subjects growing out of it, and the momentous consequences involved in it, there is enough to crush every vulgar ambition, and to inspire us with a single desire to feed and save the souls of men. When men's interests for time and for eternity are at stake, ornaments of speech, gorgeous arrays of art, and even the learning of the schools, come in almost as an impertinence. Then, there is power in firm convictions of truth and duty; in a devout and lowly faith; in an intense sympathy for man, drawing us on to deeds of generous, all-enduring love. In a soul thus prepared and endowed, moving on with singleness of purpose under the heaven-inspired impulse of truth and duty, there resides something of the Omnipotence of God. He

sends it forth on its mission, and goes with it where it goes. Like the Son of God, it may be despised and rejected of men; it may seem to be put down, or killed and buried; but it comes back; it rises from its ashes, it gains the homage of those who had thought to destroy it, it subdues the world, triumphs over death, ascends into heaven.

This mortal life, with its daily interests and pursuits, must soon pass from us. This world, so vast and so beautiful, with whatsoever it contains that is most evanescent or most substantial, its clouds and its mountain ranges, its rainbows and its stars, its flowers that bloom only to fade and its ocean waves that beat for ages on the same desolate shore, will soon vanish away. In the procession of living beings that rise and pass before us and then sink down to be seen on earth no more, we seem at times to move only amid shadows and dreams. The invisible alone stands out with the distinctness of a great and everlasting reality. Changes of life, we all know what they are;—changes of home, we all know what they are. Changes in our friends, changes in our own hearts, are always here. God be with us in this changing world. But there is a world within, which in this sense changes not, but shall endure when all this pageantry of life is ended. The work this day begun upon the soul, frail and slight though it may

seem, shall live when these walls lie buried in the smouldering ashes of the world's last grave, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and death be swallowed up in victory. And when the chief shepherd shall himself appear to him who has "fed the flock of God which is among you," then will he give to him "a crown of glory, that fadeth not away."

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY REV. DR. FLINT, OF SALEM.

I give you this right hand, my brother, with whatever of Apostolic significance the occasion may attach to it,—as I am here, in the first place, by invitation of your friends of this Christian congregation, to express to you, by this act, the warm and unanimous welcome with which they are ready to receive you to the unconditional and free occupancy of this pulpit, and to their hearts and homes, as their Christian pastor and teacher. By the same token, in behalf of the pastors and churches of our common faith here represented, I proffer to you their cordial greetings and welcome to this, your new field of labor in the Christian ministry, and of the continued exercise of your well and widely known pastoral gifts and approved ability for the work of this ministry. Your brethren in this ministry rejoice with their respective churches to recognize and receive you to their communion and fellowship as a beloved brother and faithful minister of Jesus Christ. They purpose and promise in good faith to accord to you, while they expect you to reciprocate, their fraternal respect, love and sympathy, and the interchange of all the kind and friendly

offices, encouragements, supports and helps, as they may be needed, which are implied in the idea of true christian fellowship, as it should exist everywhere among the ministers and disciples of the same Lord, as we are assured it existed among the primitive pastors and disciples, when their persecutors could say of them, "See how these Christians love one another!"

By extending to you this right hand, I am authorized by them to pledge to you the faithful adherence, the cordial union and co-operation in every Christian good work and enterprise, of the several pastors in nearest vicinity, and in most frequent and intimate intercourse with whom you will be brought by your new position. They feel already an increase of strength in receiving you to a participation with them in the labors and in promoting the unspeakably important interests, and ends of the yet honored,—at least in this vicinity,—and dearly prized Christian ministry;—a profession, or calling, my brother, which "when its true nature is understood and its true spirit is imbibed," has been pronounced by one, who well understood and fulfilled its purpose, "almost infinitely the highest above all others," in which man can be employed. Its aim is to make God's infinite love known and *felt* by his human children, *and responded to* by them in loving obedience, in filial trust, in pureness of living and helping one another, as brethren,—to make the worldly and sensual, spiritual and holy,—to convert the worshippers of mammon and pleasure, to true worshippers and doers of the

will of God,—to comfort the afflicted, to raise the fallen and bowed down,—to breathe into the soul pure and generous affections,—and thus to form it to the love and likeness of Christ.

The accession of a new fellow-helper of your brethren, engaged in these most beneficent,—these divinest of labors,—is hailed by them and this Christian community, as an event of auspicious augury to the interests, influence and power of the pure, unadulterated Christian gospel, and as an evidence that this ancient church is destined still to flourish, and aspire heavenward, *like the tree planted by the river's side, that yields its fruit in due season, whose leaf does not wither.*

You come at a time, when the heated controversies and wordy strife of conflicting parties in politics and religion are greatly allayed, if not spent, and there is on every side, a manifest disposition and tendency to an agreement and maintenance alike of civil and religious *unity of spirit in the bond of peace.* You may therefore promise yourself a peaceful, and be encouraged by the hope, of a fruitful ministry; *for the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.* Not indeed that you can expect that you are to walk and work always beneath serene and halcyon skies. Clouds will doubtless sometimes gather over you and darken your path. But clouds, you know, must pass over you before your sky can be brightened by the bow of beauty and the promise of more tranquil and cloudless days, of which it is the sure harbinger.

It has afforded me great pleasure, my brother, to have been the appointed organ to express to you the welcome of your brethren and the churches, upon your coming to abide among us, and what they anticipate from your ministry here. I heartily join in the welcome; but can have but a brief space to witness or to share in the anticipated results. The years I have numbered and my waning strength admonish me, that my congratulations upon the consummation of the sacred relation here and now formed, will close most fitly with a farewell wish and fervent prayer that the best hopes and largest expectations, to which the occasion has given birth in you and the people, to whom you are to minister, may be more than fulfilled, in your mutual affection, confidence and happiness in each other, in the fruits of righteousness and growing experience of all the joys and consolations, which the religion you preach imparts to its sincere disciples;—and when your work is done here, having been faithful unto the end, and turned many to righteousness, may you receive the promised crown of life, that fadeth not away.

NOTICES OF
THE FIRST CHURCH IN SALEM
AND ITS MINISTERS,
1629 TO 1853.

BY A MEMBER.

REV. MR. BRIGGS is the sixteenth minister of the First Church,—the tenth of those who had been approved ministers elsewhere before their settlement here, and the second that came from the ancient church of Plymouth,—from the church first assembled for Christian worship, to the church first gathered and organized, in New England.

“A brief Historical Sketch of the First Church, in Salem,” was appended to “Principles of the Reformation: A Sermon preached November 16, 1826, at the Dedication of the House of Public Worship of the First Congregational Society in Salem, by Charles W. Upham, Associate Pastor.” And by the same author, in “The Second Century Lecture of the First Church,” entitled “Principles of Congregationalism,” was given in illustration of his subject, an interesting sketch of the First Church and its ministers from the beginning. But these excellent discourses are now out of print and cannot easily be obtained. It is to be hoped that the learned author will find leisure to combine and expand them into a complete history of the Church and the Town,—a history that would not supersede, but fitly accompany Mr. Felt’s valuable “Annals of Salem.”

The following brief notices of the First Church and its ministers, and the various modes of ordination, are taken chiefly from Bentley’s History of Salem, (in Mass. Hist. Coll. VI. 212,) Felt’s Annals of Salem, 1st and 2d ed., Young’s Chronicles of Massachusetts, and the records of the Church.

The foundation of the First Church in Salem is identical with that of the town itself. The Massachusetts Company,—having sent over Captain John Endicott and others, in 1628, to carry on the plantation at Naumkeag,—at a meeting of the company in London, April 8th, 1629, appointed Mr. Endicott to be the governor, and Francis Hig-

ginson, Samuel Skelton, and Francis Bright, whom they had engaged as ministers, to be members of his Council. These, together with Ralph Smith, another minister, and a large number of people, arrived at Naumkeag on the 29th of June, 1629. Mr. Smith soon went to Plymouth, and Mr. Bright, pursuant to the company's instructions, removed to Charlestown. Naumkeag now received the name of Salem, a Hebrew word meaning peace, Mr. Higginson and others being "earnest to have it designated by a term significant of their enjoying freedom from civil and ecclesiastical oppression." Gov. Endicott immediately set apart the 20th of July as a solemn day of humiliation for the choice of a Pastor and Teacher. Charles Gott,* who was present on that day, gives, in a letter to Gov. Bradford, of Plymouth, dated July 30th, an account of the public services. "The former part of the day," he says, "being spent in praise and teaching, the latter part was spent about the election,—which was after this manner: Every fit member wrote in a note his name whom the Lord moved him to think was fit for a Pastor, and so likewise whom they would have for a Teacher; so the most voice was for Mr. Skelton to be Pastor and Mr. Higginson to be Teacher. And, they accepting the choice, Mr. Higginson with three or four more of the gravest members of the church laid their hands on Mr. Skelton, using prayers therewith. This being done, then there was imposition of hands on Mr. Higginson." The choice of Deacons and Ruling Elders was deferred to Thursday, August 6th,—which was appointed as another day of humiliation for the complete organization of the church; upon which the ordination of ministers also was renewed.

* Mr. CHARLES GOTT was a representative from Salem in the General Court in 1635, and a deacon of the church there. The selectmen, June 25, 1638, voted to him and John Horne, five acres of land, situated in South Fields near Castle Hill, long known as the Deacons' Marsh.—*Felt's Annals*.

The original grant of the Deacons' Marsh, as recorded in the Town's Book, is as follows:

"Item, There is granted to John Horne, two acres of Marsh ground, until the town do further dispose of the same."

"Item, To Charles Gott two acres of Marsh ground, upon the same conditions; and that the said Charles Gott shall have one acre more, if there be any in the town's hands, when other men are provided for."

Both were deacons, and their *successors*, not their *heirs*, took the Marsh. John Horne, or rather *Orne*, (for so he signed his will, proved in 1684,) was deacon from 1629 to 1684. From him descended all the Salem Ornes. He left four sons, John, Symon, Joseph, Benjamin. Joseph was great-grand father to the late Dr. Joseph Orne, of H. C., class of 1765.

“The Plymouth church,” says Mr. Felt, “was invited to take part in the ordination, with the understanding that their counsel was to be nothing more than discretionary. Of their delegates was Gov. Bradford. He and his attendants were prevented by adverse winds from being here in the forenoon, but they arrived seasonably enough to present the Right hand of Fellowship.”

It was an agreed principle with the founders of this church, “that the authority of ordination should not exist in the clergy, but should depend entirely upon the free election of the members of the church.” Mr. Felt justly observes: “They called no man master. They resorted to the Bible as the ultimate standard of moral distinctions and religious principles.” Such, too, was the truly liberal spirit of the covenant they adopted, drawn up, undoubtedly, by Mr. Higginson. It engaged them to walk together in all the ways of God, “according as he is pleased to reveal himself to us in his blessed word of truth;”—“to reject all contrary ways, canons, and constitutions of men;” and “to study the advancement of the gospel in all truth and peace.” *

Dr. Bentley says of this covenant: “It may be esteemed, if not for its theology, for its simplicity. If it speaks not the language of a sect, it breathes the spirit of Christian union. It never could be intended so much to display opinions, as by written obligation to fasten men together.”—“Mr. Higginson’s doctrines were mild. While he freely adopted the common language of divines in his own age, he did not insist upon such distinctions as embitter and divide. His discipline was formed upon the manners of the people; and if severe to us, could not have been severe to them. As it was a guard upon morals, it was safe.”

Such was the foundation of the First Church in Salem.

“Instead of being titled Reverend, then and a considerable period afterwards, Congregational ministers were called Elders.”

“The Ruling Elder selected was Mr. Henry Haughton. This office was considered an important one, and continued to be esteemed in the colonial churches till the middle of the last century. The duty of such officers was to preach, occasionally, in the absence, or on the

* MORTON, in his *New England’s Memorial*, speaking of this covenant, says, it “was acknowledged only as a direction, pointing unto that faith and covenant contained in the holy scripture, and therefore no man was confined unto that form of words, but only to the substance, end and scope of the matter contained therein.” Again, “some did present their confession in writing, which was read for them; and some, that were able and willing, did make their confession in their own words and way.”—*Davis’s Ed.*

illness of the ministers, and also to assist in cases of church discipline." The custom of choosing two elders was continued in the First Church to a very recent period. The late Hon. John Pickering was one of the last chosen, the other, after Mr. Pickering's removal to Boston, resigned the office, and no successor has since been chosen. Their authority had become merely nominal, except to advise with the deacons when consulted by them.

I.

REV. FRANCIS HIGGINSON.

1629 TO 1630.

Of the early ministers of the First Church, it may truly be said, in the language of a recent biographer of one of them, that they were "divines who had won the highest respect in their native land, and who were among the holiest and most gifted men of the age." *

"The venerable Higginson, the father and pattern of the New England clergy," as Mr. Savage so happily calls him, † deserves the first place among them. He received his education at Jesus College, Cambridge, and took his first degree in 1609. He was minister of one of the parish churches in Leicester, where, it is said, "he was so popular a preacher, that the people flocked to hear him from all the neighboring towns." Neal, the historian of the Puritans, says: "He was a good scholar, of a sweet and affable behaviour, and having a charming voice, was one of the most acceptable and popular preachers of the country." Becoming a non-conformist, by his conscientious study of the scriptures, he was ejected from his living, and forbidden to preach in England. His remarkable gifts and graces qualified him to be a chief agent in the great enterprise for which he was so earnestly sought. Nor did he disappoint the high hopes entertained of him. Few as were his days after arriving here, he accomplished his great work. "He lived," says Dr. Bentley, "to secure the foundation of his church, to deserve the esteem of the colony, and to provide himself a name among the worthies of New England."

He died on the 6th of August, 1630, just one year from his installation. "He was grave in his deportment," adds Dr. Bentley, "and pure in his morals. In his person he was slender, not tall: not easily changed from his purposes, but not rash in declaring them. He held the hearts of his people, and his memory was dear to their posterity." He left a widow, Ann, and eight children. The children's names and

* Elton's Life of Roger Williams. † Savage's Winthrop i. 2.

ages at the time of his arrival, as given by Dr. Young, were as follows:—John 13. Francis 12. Timothy 10. Theophilus 9. Samuel 8. Ann 6. Mary 4, (who died on the passage.) Charles 1. Neophytus, born in Salem.

With the cares of such a family, added to his arduous public duties and labors, in a feeble state of health too, Mr. Higginson must have possessed uncommon energy and power, to undertake the task of writing the “*Journal of his Voyage*,” and the “*New England’s Plantation*,” and to finish the task in the manner he did.

II.

REV. SAMUEL SKELTON.

1629 to 1634.

The high character of Mr. Skelton is sufficiently proved by the confidence reposed in him, not only by Gov. Endicott, who looked up to him as his spiritual father, but by the company in England, who selected him as one of the two, who were to take the governor’s place, in case of Mr. Endicott’s death.

Mr. Skelton was educated at Clare Hall, Cambridge, taking his first degree in 1611. It has been inferred, as Dr. Young observes, from his being appointed pastor, that he was older than Mr. Higginson. But as he took his first degree at college two years later,* it would seem that he could not have been much older. And if he were, it does not appear that on that account he was chosen pastor, and Mr. Higginson teacher.† He survived Mr. Higginson about four years, during which he was sole pastor, excepting the two brief periods that Roger Williams was his assistant. He died August 2, 1634. Though a strict disciplinarian, he was a friend to the utmost equality of privileges in church and state. “No particular records,” says Dr. Bentley, “were kept of his services. As he never acted alone, he yielded to others all the praise of his best actions.” Edward Johnson, his contemporary, describes him, as “a man of a gracious speech, full of faith, and

* See Mr. Savage’s *Gleanings, &c.*, Mass. Hist. Coll. xxviii. 248.

† The terms pastor and teacher, as applied to our early ministers, seem to have had no reference to age. Some difference of office was doubtless intended, according to the import of the terms, but it soon came to be more a distinction than a difference.

Of all the ministers of the First Church, but four sustained the title of teacher, viz: Francis Higginson, Roger Williams, Edward Norris, and Nicholas Noyes — the last of whom, in his record of the ordination of Mr. Curwin, his young colleague, as pastor, styles himself “the Teacher.”

furnished by the Lord with gifts from above, to begin this great work of His."

Dr. Eliot, in his biographical notice of Mr. Skelton, observes: "There was a want of friendship between the ministers of Boston and its neighborhood, and the ministers of Salem. Every thing which one party did, was found fault with by the other. It is remarkable," he adds, "that no kind of notices of the character of Mr. Skelton, a man so distinguished among the first planters, should have been given by writers of that or the succeeding generation. Gov. Winthrop just mentions his death; Dr. Mather mentions very little about him."

Mr. Skelton left a son, Samuel, and three daughters. His wife died in March 1631. Gov. Dudley, in his letter to the Countess of Lincoln, says: "She was a Godly and helpful woman, and indeed a main pillar of her family, having left behind her a husband, and four children weak and helpless, who can scarce tell how to live without her."

III.

REV. ROGER WILLIAMS.

1633 TO 1636.

Roger Williams was born in Wales, in 1599. Late in life, he says of himself: "The truth is, from my childhood, now above three score years, the Father of lights and mercies touched my heart with a love to himself," &c. It is related that the famous Sir Edward Coke observed him, one day, during public worship, taking notes of the discourse. In consequence of the impression which Sir Edward upon further acquaintance, received of the boy's talents, he took him under his patronage, and gave him an education at the University of Oxford. Afterwards, under the guidance of the same generous patron, he entered upon the study of the law; but changed it for the study of theology, to which he devoted himself, took Episcopal orders, and assumed, while in England, the charge of a parish. Whatever may be the truth of these relations, his life, as Mr. Savage remarks, "proves he had learned more than in that day was commonly taught." He emigrated to this country a resolute non-conformist, and arrived at Boston, early in February 1631,—six months after the death of Francis Higginson. The Salem Church invited him to settle as teacher and colleague with Mr. Skelton. He accepted their invitation, and became their minister on the 12th of April following. But the governor and magistrates interfered and made such opposition to his settlement, that he was indu-

eed to leave Salem before the close of the summer, and to become assistant to Mr. Ralph Smith in the ministry at Plymouth. The opposition from the civil authorities to his remaining in Salem, sprung from certain opinions divulged by Mr. Williams soon after his arrival. He thought that the ministers and people of Boston had conformed, to a sinful degree, with the English church, and ought to declare their repentance; that the royal patent could give them no title to their lands without a purchase from the natives; that the civil power could not rightly punish breaches of the Sabbath, nor in any way interfere with the rights of conscience,—with other offensive opinions of less importance. Open, bold, and ardently conscientious, as well as eloquent and highly gifted, it cannot be surprising that he should have disturbed the magistrates by divulging such opinions, while he charmed the people by his powerful preaching, and his amiable, generous, and disinterested spirit. After laboring among the people of Plymouth, about two years, with great acceptance and usefulness, he asked a dismissal, in 1633, upon being invited by the church at Salem to return to them as assistant to Mr. Skelton. He returned accordingly, and during Mr. Skelton's life labored with him in great harmony and affection, and after his death, was sole minister of the church till November 1635. At this time, the renewed opposition of the magistrates, strengthened as it was by a treatise he had written against the patent, had come to a crisis, and Roger Williams was driven from Salem, and became an exile in the wilderness. But what was then his reproach, is now his honor; and his banishment led directly to his chief glory,—the glory of founding a state upon the basis of civil and religious freedom.

“In Salem,” says Dr. Bentley, “every person loved Mr. Williams. All valued his friendship. Kind treatment could win him, but opposition could not conquer him. He was not afraid to stand alone for truth against the world.” “It is a happy relief,” adds Dr. B., “in contemplating so eccentric a character, that no sufferings induced any purposes of revenge, for which he afterwards had great opportunities; that great social virtues corrected the first errors of his opinions; and that he lived to exhibit to the natives a noble example of generous goodness, and to be the parent of the independent state of Rhode Island. He died in his colony, in 1683, in the 84th year of his age.”

It ought to be added, perhaps, that the late John Quincy Adams, in his “Discourse on the New England Confederacy of 1643,”* eloquently vindicates the Boston magistrates and ministers, in regard to their treatment of Roger Williams. Yet he highly, if not justly, appreciates his character. “He was an eloquent preacher,” he observes,

*Mass. Hist. Coll. xxix 206.

“stiff and self-confident in his opinions, ingenious, powerful, and commanding in impressing them upon others, inflexible in his adherence to them, and, by an inconsistency peculiar to religious enthusiasts, combining the most amiable and affectionate sympathies of the heart with the most repulsive and inexorable exclusion of conciliation, compliance, or intercourse with his adversaries in opinion.”

Dr. Elton, however, the latest biographer of Roger Williams, says, “The conduct of Williams on the occasion to the magistrates and clergy was mild and conciliating; and, although he did not retract his opinions, he offered to burn the offensive book, and furnished satisfactory evidence of his “loyalty.”* Dr. Elton consequently regards the sentence passed upon him as “cruel and unjustifiable.” The truth appears to be that there were faults on both sides, and that they were faults of the age rather than of the heart. It is the peculiar glory of Roger Williams, that in his great doctrine that *the civil power has no jurisdiction over the conscience*, he rose above the age, and that he was stout enough to sustain himself nobly against opposition and difficulties which would have crushed any common man.

“His excellent wife survived him, and, as far as can be ascertained, the whole of his family, consisting of six children. His lineal descendants are numerous, and may justly rejoice in the diffusion alike of the fame and of the principles of their ancestor.”†

IV.

REV. HUGH PETERS.

1636 TO 1641.

Hugh Peters, (or Peter, as he himself spelt his name), was born at Fowey, in Cornwall, in 1599, and was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took the degree of A. M., in 1622. Upon leaving the University, he came to London, and was appointed lecturer at St. Sepulchre's. Towards the close of 1629, when Laud began his persecution of the Puritans, he went to Holland, and became pastor of an independent church at Rotterdam, having for a colleague, the celebrated Dr. William Ames. After remaining six years in that country, he came to New England, Oct. 6, 1635. For some time after his arrival, he divided his Sabbath labors between Boston and Salem. The church at Salem invited him to settle with them, and he became their pastor Dec. 21, 1636. According to Dr. Bentley's account of him, he entitled himself to the lasting gratitude of Salem, both as a

* Life of Roger Williams, 25. † Ib. 149.

minister and citizen. The town never saw greater peace, prosperity, or increase, in so short a period.

He interested himself in reforming the police of the town. The best regulations obtained. He stimulated industry, and the spirit of improvement. The arts were introduced. A water-mill was erected; a glass-house; salt-works; the planting of hemp was encouraged, and a regular market was established. Commerce received most earnest attention. He formed the plan of the fishery, of the coasting voyages, of the foreign voyages; and, among many other vessels, one of three hundred tons was undertaken under his influence.

Ever active and engaged in business, at home and abroad, he did not forget his church. He was the first to object to the unreasonable avocations from business by the numerous weekly and occasional lectures, which he suppressed. Being frequently absent, Mr. John Fisk, a worthy man, from King's College, Cambridge, then residing in Salem, assisted him in his pulpit. He was assisted, also, the first year, by Mr. George Burdet, who had supplied the pulpit after the departure of Mr. Williams, and continued in Salem till 1637.

As Mr. Peters was much engaged in trade, and had often done the business of the colony, he was thought a proper person to return to England, and to represent the sense of the colony upon the laws of excise and trade. Such was the affection of his people, that every remonstrance was made against the proposition. The court pressed, then solicited, and at length entreated that he might be in the commission with Mr. Weld and Mr. Hibbins. No man ever possessed more sincerely the affections of his people. Mr. Endicott, too, opposed it with great warmth. But it was finally agreed to, and Mr. Peters, with his two colleagues, left the colony on the 3d of August, 1641. We need not follow him into England. It was a melancholy separation to the people, and it was awful in its consequences to him. He rose into high favor with Cromwell and his Parliament, who granted to him Archbishop Laud's library, with various rich donations from noblemen's estates. No wonder, then, that he suffered with the regicides after the restoration. He fell a martyr to the cause he had so zealously espoused, on the 16th of October, 1660.

Dr. Bentley represents Mr. Peters as tall and thin; active and sprightly; peculiarly forcible in his language and speech. He had a power of associating his thoughts in such a manner as to fix them upon the memory. Wherever he went, whatever he said, it was sure to be remembered. This talent gave him his thousands in London, his fame in Holland, his success in raising monies every where. It gave

him influence in America, and the power to command the people of every name in defiance of a chaster eloquence employed against him.

Gov. Winthrop describes Hugh Peters as "a man of a very public spirit and singular activity for all occasions;" and says, that he "went from place to place, laboring, both publicly and privately, to raise up men to a public frame of spirit, and so prevailed as he procured a good sum of money to be raised to set on foot the fishing business."* He thus proved himself a real benefactor not only to Salem, but to the whole colony. Mr. Felt in his interesting Memoir of Hugh Peters, has ably vindicated his character, placing him upon a level with his distinguished contemporary worthies of New England.

Mr. Upham's high appreciation of him is well known. "Passion, prejudice, and interest, he says, in his 2d Century Lecture, "have all combined in heaping calumny and reproach upon the character of Hugh Peters.—But their day has passed, and justice will finally be done to the aspersed fame of the martyred and abused philanthropist. I feel sure that there is no hazard in predicting that he will, ere long, be acknowledged as one of the best and greatest characters of the age in which he lived."

V.

REV. EDWARD NORRIS.

1640 TO 1659.

Mr. Norris, who had been a clergyman in England, came to Salem in 1639, and joined the church here in December of that year. As he was a man of distinguished learning and influence, he was doubtless educated at one of the English Universities. Not long after his arrival he was duly elected a colleague with Mr. Peters, and ordained March 18, 1640. Under this date, Gov. Winthrop, in his History of New England, says: "Mr. Norris was ordained Teacher of the church of Salem, there being present near all the Elders of the other churches, and much people besides."† Dr. Bentley says: "this is the first ordination, which was performed with great public ceremonies in Salem." Mr. Savage, the learned editor of Winthrop's History, says of Mr. Norris: "Much influence in the State was exerted by him, of which evidence will appear in this history."

After the departure of Mr. Peters, Mr. Norris was sole minister of the church about eighteen years, and during his whole ministry, he was highly esteemed for his ability and faithfulness. Nor was his at-

* Savage's Winthrop, i. 176. † Ib. 329.

tention confined to his parochial duties. He took an active interest in the public affairs of the colony.

In 1642, he replied to a book, written by Mr. Saltonstall, one of the assistants, on the subject of a permanent council. Gov. Winthrop was pleased with the reply, and said, that this grave and judicious Elder treated the book with that just severity in deserved.

In 1646, he preached the Election sermon. "He represented his church," says Mr. Felt, "in the synod, at its session, Oct. 1647; and was on a committee of seven, to draw up the system of Ecclesiastical Discipline, substantially contained in the Cambridge Platform."

In 1653, he wrote an able letter to the General Court, signed by himself, and his ruling elder, Samuel Sharpe, in the name, and by the vote of the church, remonstrating against an order, just passed, forbidding any person to preach without the approbation of elders belonging to the four next churches, or the County Court.

The first of the three reasons, urged by him against the order, being in the true spirit of the founders of the First Church, is copied here:—"First, because it incroacheth upon the liberties of the several churches, who have power to choose and set up over them, whom they please for their edification and comfort, without depending on any other power, and if a break be once made into these liberties, we know not how far it may proceed in time, there being such a leading example as this." The order was repealed the same year.

Dr. Eliot says that Mr. Norris interfered so little in the affairs of other churches, that when the platform of church discipline was adopted in 1648, he persevered in a platform of his own church, and preserved not only the love of his people, but the respect of his neighbors to his death. He was more liberal in his ideas of toleration, than most ministers in New England, and was never active in proceedings against the baptists or other sectaries.

Mr. Norris died Dec. 23, 1659, aged about 70. He left one son, Edward, teacher of the school, to whom he bequeathed his house, land, books, and all his property. Mr. Felt speaks of his talents and acquirements, as more than common, and of his character as worthy of our high esteem. His worth, he says, was an honor to the town, and its salutary influence must have been long experienced. "With Mr. Norris," says Dr. Bentley, "we close the history of the ministers of the first generation. The consistent politics, the religious moderation, and the ardent patriotism of Mr. Norris, entitle him to the grateful memory of Salem. He finished in peace the longest life in the ministry, which had been enjoyed in Salem, and died in his charge."

During the last year or two of Mr. Norris's life, Mr. John Whiting, a graduate of Harvard College in 1653, assisted in the ministry, and was invited to become his successor, but declined the call.

VI.

REV. JOHN HIGGINSON.

1660 TO 1708.

The church records up to this period contain only the original covenant, the names of church members, and the baptisms. With this ministry commence the fuller records that have been spared to us. We cannot, perhaps, give a better account of the call, answer, and settlement of John Higginson, than in his own words, recorded by himself, at the beginning of these fuller records, as follows :

“ 1660—John Higginson, formerly a member of this church, being removed from Guilford, and come to the Bay, in order to his going for England, was, by importunity, prevailed with to stay here for one year, and desired by two general votes of the church and the town, to continue with them in the work of the ministry. After his continuance here almost a year, he gave his answer to the call of the church and people here in these words :

“ It hath been matter of serious inquiry to me what should be the will of God, and my duty in this great turn of my life, especially in ordering my abode here amongst you for a time, which hath been overruled by the Providence of God wholly beyond my own intention, in my removal from the place where I was before. And yet truly, when I have considered all, I incline to look at the call of the people here as the call of God, for my continuance amongst you. I desire to be thankful to God and thankful to you all for your love to me and mine, and am willing to settle amongst you so long as the church and people of God here continue in the steadfastness of faith in Christ and order of the Gospel as you now do; and so long as I find that I can (with a good conscience.) carry on that part of the work of Christ, which may belong to me, and discharge my duty to my family. I do express myself willing to settle amongst you with a true intention, and a true affection, having no other thoughts or desires but to live and die amongst you as my Father did before.”

Mr. Higginson then signifies his desire that they would make choice of a ruling elder, “ the place being great, the people many, and the work like to be much, especially in such times as these. And for my-

self, I know my own weakness many ways, and that I shall have need of the freedom of my spirit and command of my time, that I may in some measure fulfil the work of the ministry unto which I am called of God by yourselves."

"Letters were sent unto four of the neighbor churches, of Ipswich, Lynn, Reading and Boston, to give them notice of the church's intention about the ordination at that time, desiring the presence of their elders and messengers."

On the 29th of August, 1660, "John Higginson was ordained Pastor, with prayer and fasting and imposition of hands, preaching out of I Cor. 3:7, 'He that plants is nothing, and he that watereth is nothing, but God that gives the increase.' The church having no elders then, our honored brother, Major Hawthorn, and the two deacons, imposed hands on the Pastor, and then the Pastor and the two deacons imposed hands on the Ruling Elder. The Elders of the foresaid churches being present, (with many others,) Mr. Norton, Teacher of the church of Boston, did in the name of the rest give the right hand of fellowship to both our Elders, showing from Gal. 2:3, that the right hand of fellowship was a sign of communion and helpfulness which both churches and Elders were engaged in one towards another, as the case might require."

In the first proceedings of the church, under Mr. Higginson, may be seen the origin of some of our present customs. At a meeting of the church, September 10th, 1660, it was voted, that Mr. Cotton's catechism be used in families in teaching children in order to public catechising in the congregation; that the administration of the Lord's Supper in the ordinary course be once a month; that every member of the church, (except the poor,) bring in to the deacons half a crown so often as might be necessary for the expense; and that on days of Humiliation and Thanksgiving a contribution should be taken for the poor of the church.

A public Fast was appointed for the following, among other purposes:—"To renew our covenant and to add that clause of taking heed of the leaven of the Quakers." Here we see the occasion of that blotch upon the venerable church covenant which marred its beauty for a time. But though Mr. Higginson was provoked to be zealous overmuch against the Quakers, he lived to lament the warmth of his zeal, and perhaps to learn prudence in respect to the witchcraft persecution, in which he took no active part.

The following, from Mr. Higginson's later records, is copied chiefly for the notice taken of the excellent old Deacon Orne, before mentioned.

At a church meeting, Jan. 12, 1680, "The Synod book,—in answer to these 2 questions,—1. What are the provoking evils procuring the late dreadful judgments of God against New England.—2. What are remedies and means for reformation,—was read over and considered.—Also, our brother Horne having been Deacon of this church above this 50 years, being now very antient, the church proceeded and agreed to choose 2 Deacons to be added unto him.—Also, the church voted the continuance of the contribution for the poor."

Mr. Charles Nicholet was an assistant to Mr. Higginson in the ministry from 1672 to 1676, and made himself very popular, and thus brought trouble upon Mr. Higginson, who could not agree with the people in thinking him worthy to be settled as his colleague. For the last twenty-five years of his life, he found in Mr. Noyes an associate and friend in whom he took the most cordial satisfaction. Mr. Higginson, at the age of fourteen lost his father, and was left with his mother and her seven younger children —objects of his care as well as affection. Mr. Felt says: "He was assisted in getting an education by the chief magistrates and ministers of the colony, for whom he ever cherished feelings of gratitude and esteem." His education was the best the country afforded. He made himself acquainted with the Indian language. He was instructor of a school in Hartford, and pursued his theological studies with Mr. Hooker; after whose death he transcribed 200 of his sermons, about half of which were printed in England. Having been chaplain at Saybrook fort a number of years, he was settled in the ministry at Guilford as colleague with Mr. Henry Whitfield, whose daughter he married. Thence he came to Salem. He was born at Claybrook, England, August 6, 1616. He died in Salem, Dec. 9, 1708, in the 93d year of his age. Cotton Mather preached his funeral sermon, and bestowed high and just praise upon this "venerable and memorable servant of Christ." He also extolled his people for their "honorable treatment" of their aged Pastor. "They would not," he says, "forget his merits, but continued their support of him with a gratitude and generosity that must never be forgotten. The eldest sister of all the churches in the Massachusetts Colony, (and a mother in our Israel,) has given an example to them all."

Mr. Higginson preached the Election Sermon in 1663, which was much commended; and was the author of various publications greatly valued in their day. "Such," says Mr Felt, "were his talents, attainments, and virtues, such his aims and exertions, in particular for the town, and in general for New England, that he deserves to be remembered by the people of Salem with high and lasting esteem."

Mr. Higginson's first wife died in 1678, and he married Mary, a widow, of Boston, who survived him some months. He left children by his first wife, John, Nathaniel, Thomas, and Anna, having lost Francis, Henry and Sarah. John, of the Governor's Council, lived in Salem, Nathaniel graduated at Harvard College in 1670, and went to England in 1674.

VII.

REV. NICHOLAS NOYES.

1683 to 1717.

Mr. Noyes was the nephew of Rev. James Noyes, first minister of Newbury together with Rev. Thomas Parker, and was born in that town; Dec. 22, 1647.

In his letter to Cotton Mather, giving an account of his uncle's life, he says: "In the same ship came Mr. Thomas Parker, Mr. James Noyes, and a younger brother of his, Mr. Nicholas Noyes, who then was a single man: Between which three was a more than ordinary endearment of affection." Of this Mr. Nicholas Noyes he was the son, and by this Mr. Thomas Parker he was educated at Harvard College, where he took his first degree, in 1667.

Before preaching in Salem, Mr. Noyes had been thirteen years in the ministry at Haddam. "The church and people," says our record, "having considered the Pastor's motion for another minister, and having heard a good report of Mr. N. Noyes, and that he was free; having also the credible testimony of divers magistrates and ministers concerning him for his ability, piety and suitableness for Salem,—they did unanimously agree to call him to the work of the ministry, and it pleased God to facilitate some difficulties that were in the way, that in the issue, he came to us and entered on the work of the ministry the first week of May."

At a church meeting, 1st week of November, 1683, "The church having agreed, did by their vote choose and call Mr. Noyes to the office of a Teacher in this church, agreeing also on Nov. 14, for the day of ordination. Accordingly letters were sent to the churches of Newbury, Rowley, Ipswich, Wenham and Beverly, to give notice of it, &c."

"On the day appointed, the Elders and Messengers of the forenamed churches were present. Mr. Noyes preached on Mark i. 7,8. He was ordained by imposition of hands of the Pastor and Mr. Hubbard of Ipswich, and Mr. Phillips of Rowley. Also, Mr. Hubbard gave

the Right Hand of Fellowship, in the name of the neighbor Elders. He observed that as Enoch was the seventh from Adam, so Mr. Noyes was the seventh ordained minister in Salem."

Mr. Noyes sustained a high reputation for learning in theology and general literature. But, with other great and good men, he was carried away by the witchcraft delusion. It should be remembered, however, that he had the magnanimity afterwards to confess his error and make all the reparation in his power.

Mr. Noyes was never married. He died Dec. 13, 1717, a few weeks after his lamented colleague, at the age of 70.

His character as given at the time, together with that of Mr. Curwin, is recorded in the church book. He is there represented as having been extraordinarily accomplished for the work of the ministry. He is extolled for his superior genius, his pregnant wit, strong memory, solid judgment, and his great acquisition in human learning; for his conversation among men, especially with his friends, so very pleasant, entertaining and profitable; for his uncommon attainments in the study of divinity, his eminent sanctity, gravity and virtue, his services and learned performances in the pulpit; and for his wisdom in human affairs, and his constant solicitude for the public good. John Hunton, an intelligent English traveller, who visited Mr. Noyes in 1686, says of him: "He is all that is delightful in conversation; it is no lessening to his brother Higginson to say that he is no ways inferior to him for good preaching or primitive living." Mr. Noyes preached the Election sermon, 1698, which was published, and, besides his excellent Letter to Cotton Mather, as Mr. Savage calls it, he was the author of a poem on the death of his venerable colleague, and also of one on the death of Rev. J. Green; but it was not as a poet that he became so famous in his day.

VIII.

REV. GEORGE CURWIN.

1714 to 1717.

Mr. George Curwin was the son of Hon. Jonathan Curwin. He was born in Salem, May 21, 1683, and graduated at Harvard College in 1701.

Having been for a number of years an assistant in the ministry with Mr. Noyes, he was ordained as Pastor and colleague, on the 19th of May, 1714. The record, (by Mr. Noyes,) says: "May 19, the Rev.

Mr. George Curwin was ordained Pastor of this church. The Teacher gave him the charge; Dr. Cotton Mather gave him the right hand of fellowship; the Elders and Messengers of the North Church in Boston; and of the church in Brattle street in Boston, and of the first church in Ipswich, and of the church in Beverly, and of the church in Marblehead, and of the church at Salem Village,—most, if not all of the Elders laid on hands. Dr. Mather began with prayer; Mr. Curwin preached on 2 Cor. 2:16,—the last clause; Mr. Gerrish made the concluding prayer; Mr. Curwin pronounced the blessing.”

Mr. Curwin died, Nov. 23, 1717. His ministry was short, but in the highest degree meritorious. The church record says that he was “very eminent for his early improvements in learning and piety, his singular abilities, and great labors, his remarkable zeal and faithfulness in the service of his master.”

The Rev. John Barnard, of Marblehead, his early friend, preached in Salem on the public Thanksgiving, a few days after Mr. Curwin's death. The sermon was published, and dedicated to Hon. Samuel Brown, a relative of the lamented minister. Mr. Barnard, in his discourse, says of his “reverend and beloved brother, Mr. George Curwin,” that “he seemed to have been peculiarly formed from his youth for that great and noble design in which he afterwards spent a short and laborious life. The spirit of early devotion, accompanied with a natural freedom of thought, and easy elocution, a quick invention, a solid judgment, and a tenacious memory, laid the foundation of a good preacher; to which his acquired literature, his great reading, hard studies, deep meditation, and close walk with God, rendered him an able and faithful minister of the New Testament.”

Rev. Mr. Curwin married, in 1711, Mehitable, daughter of Deliverance Parkman, a distinguished merchant of Salem. Two of his sons, Samuel and George, were graduates of Harvard College, in the class of 1735; the former of whom, was the author of “Journal and Letters of the late Samuel Curwin, Judge of Admiralty, etc.” edited by his kinsman, George Atkinson Ward, A. M.

IX.

REV. SAMUEL FISK.

1718 TO 1735.

Mr. Samuel Fisk was the grandson of John Fisk, already mentioned as assistant to Hugh Peters, and afterwards minister of Wenham, and

was graduated at Harvard College, in 1708. Of his settlement over the First Church the record says:

“On the eighth of Oct. 1718, The Rev. Elders and Messengers of the churches which were invited assembled in council at Salem in pursuance of their invitation. The Rev. Mr. Thomas Blowers opened the public service by prayer. The Rev. Mr. Benjamin Colman preached, on 2 Corinthians 4:5, an excellent sermon to the vast assembly. After sermon, Mr. Fisk prayed; then the Rev. Mr. Gerrish prayed and gave the charge, the Rev. Mr. John Rogers, and Mr. Benj. Colman, and Mr. Thomas Blowers, imposing hands with him; next, the Rev. Mr. John Rogers gave the right hand of fellowship to the ordained Pastor in the name of the Rev. Elders present.

“On this ordination day the assembly met at the new church, which was now almost perfectly finished. A vast and beautiful, yet grave house it is. This is the third house erected for the public worship of God on the same spot of land on which the first church was built in this town, and which was the first in the Province.” Simultaneous with the settlement of Mr. Fisk was the formation of the second church by members dismissed from the First Church to settle Rev. Robert Stanton in the East part of the town.

Dr. Bentley says of Mr. Fisk: “He was a man of real abilities; but his high thoughts of church authority prevented his usefulness, and he was dismissed from the First Church in 1735, and accepted a new house provided by his friends, in the same street, westward, on the north side of the street. He was succeeded in the old church by Mr. John Sparhawk.” Mr. Fisk’s “high thoughts”—so repugnant to the spirit of the First Church and its founders,—led to a fierce controversy, which continued many years after he was excluded from the pulpit, but was finally settled in a Christian spirit and manner. He was dismissed from the Third church in 1745, and succeeded by Rev. Dudley Leavitt. He died in Salem, April 7th, 1770, aged 81. He preached the First Century Lecture, of the First Church, August 6, 1729. The Election Sermon, delivered by him in 1731, was published, and may be ranked among the best. His wife was Anna Gerrish. The late Gen. John Fisk, a gentleman of much distinction in Salem, was his son.

X.

REV. JOHN SPARHAWK.

1736 TO 1755.

On the 5th day of August, 1736,—“at a meeting of the brethren ad-

hering to the ancient principles of the First Church in Salem," Mr. John Sparhawk was chosen as a "meet person to discharge the office of a Gospel minister among them."

By a letter dated Cambridge, October 23, 1736. Mr. Sparhawk accepted the call, and his ordination took place on the 8th of December following. The Rev. Mr. Chipman, of Beverly, began with prayer, Mr. Appleton, of Cambridge, preached from XI Proverbs 30, Mr. Holyoke, of Marblehead, gave the charge, and Mr. Prescott, of Salem, (now Danvers,) the right hand of fellowship.

There is little to be noticed among the proceedings of the church under Mr. Sparhawk.

At a meeting, Dec. 27, 1736, it was voted, "that the Scriptures be read as a part of public worship."

The following vote illustrates the freedom of access to the communion of the First Church, which, according to the remark of Morton, in his "New England's Memorial," before referred to, existed from the beginning.

At a meeting of the church, Sept. 18, 1738, Mr. Samuel Barton having declared himself not fully satisfied of the Congregational form and method of discipline, &c., "but still is desirous to partake with the brethren in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper;—Wherefore voted.—that upon his open profession of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and his sincere endeavors to walk agreeable to the rules of the Gospel, he be admitted to the holy communion among us."

Mr. Sparhawk was the son of the Rev John Sparhawk, of Bristol. He was born in September, 1713, and graduated at Harvard College, in 1731. He married Jane, daughter of Rev. Aaron Porter, of Medford, Oct. 4, 1737. He died April 30, 1755, in the 42d year of his age. He left three sons, Nathaniel John, and Samuel, and four daughters, Priscilla, married to Hon. Nathaniel Ropes; Catharine, married to her cousin Nathaniel Sparhawk; Jane, married to John Appleton; Susanna, married to Hon. George King, of Portsmouth.

Of Mr. Sparhawk, it has been said, that he was much esteemed and beloved in his life, and in his death sincerely and universally lamented.

The late venerable Dr. Holyoke, whose minister he was, described him as "large in person, a man of dignity, and an excellent preacher."

XI.

REV. THOMAS BARNARD.

1755 TO 1776.

Mr. Thomas Barnard was the son of the Rev. John Barnard of Andover, born Aug. 16, 1716, and graduated at Harvard College in 1732. He was installed Pastor of the First Church in Salem, Sept. 17, 1755; "the Rev. Mr. Lowell of Newbury began with prayer; Rev. Mr. Clark of Danvers preached from Malachi 2:6; Rev. Mr. Barnard of Marblehead gave the charge."

Mr. Felt says of Mr. Barnard: "He was ordained at Newbury, Jan. 31, 1738,—left his people there because of difficulties about Mr. Whitfield's preaching,—studied and practised law, represented Newbury in General Court, re-entered the ministry and was installed over First Church of Salem. He left children, Thomas, John, Benjamin,—and Sarah, who married Jonathan Jackson of Newburyport. He published sermons at the ordination of his brother Edward, in Haverhill, 1743,—of Josiah Bayley, at Hampton Falls, 1757,—before Society of Industry, 1757,—at Artillery Election, 1758,—at ordination of William Whitwell, in Marblehead, 1762,—and at Election, 1763. He possessed a strong and cultivated mind. He was much beloved by his society here and highly esteemed by the public." To this list of his publications should be added his able discourse at the Dudleian Lecture, 1768, in defence of Christianity, from I Cor. 2:5, "That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

He died August 5, 1776, aged 60.

"Mr. Barnard having been taken off from his labors by the palsy," adds Mr. Felt, "and his son, Thomas, having supplied his place,—the church had a fast, Oct. 31, 1770, preparatory to the choice of a minister. Mr. Thomas Barnard, jr., and Mr. Asa Dunbar, preached as candidates, and upon the choice of the latter, the minority, friends of the former, separated peaceably, and established the North Society, settling Thomas Barnard, Jr., as their minister. The First Church, "for the continuing of peace and brotherly love," made an equitable division with them of the "temporalities of the church," though it could see no reasons for a separation, Mr. Dunbar being "admirably qualified for a Gospel preacher."

One or two matters of permanent interest in the proceedings of the church may be noticed here.

At a meeting of the church, Dec. 3d, 1760, Deacons Joshua Ward

and John Beckford were chosen to receive and improve the legacy of eighty dollars, bequeathed to the church by the late Judge Lindall, "to be improved (by such persons as the church shall choose.) by good bonds on interest,—the interest or improvement being for the Deacons of the church for the time being,—the principal not to be diminished." The Deacons of the church successively received and improved the same, using the interest, till April 21, 1819, when the principal was deposited in the Savings Bank, pursuant to a vote of the church, "in such manner that the Deacons of the said First Church, for the time being, may receive the interest thereof."

At a meeting of the church, August 2, 1762, it was unanimously voted, for the sake of peace and christian communion, to give up to the church, formed by those who went off with Rev. Mr. Fisk, in 1735, one half of the plate belonging to the First Church, at the time of the separation, or its value in money; and also to pay them an equivalent for one part of the Deacons' Marsh.

XII.

REV. ASA DUNBAR.

1772 TO 1779.

Mr. Dunbar was born in Bridgewater, May 26, 1745, graduated at Harvard College, in 1767, and ordained as colleague with Rev. Thomas Barnard, July 22, 1772. Rev. Mr. Adams of Roxbury, prayed; Rev. Mr. Appleton of Cambridge, preached; Rev. Mr. Swain of Wenhams, gave the charge; Rev. Mr. Whitwell of Marblehead, concluded with prayer; Rev. Mr. Payson of Chelsea, gave the right hand of fellowship.

Mr. Dunbar's services were interrupted by the bad state of his health, and in a few years he was induced to ask a dismission. The following letter, being characteristic of the man and the times, may be interesting to members of the society.

"To the First Church and Propriety in Salem.

My dear Christian brethren and friends,

"Such is the general state of my health, that I judge it expedient for me to ask a dismission from your service in the Gospel ministry. This request I doubt not you will think to be reasonable, and I hope your compliance with it will be greatly to your own interest.

"It would be disagreeable to me to say anything to you concerning past salary or support, did not the representation I must now make

of the matter, bear a very honorable testimony to your constant generosity. I would not, however, abuse your generosity by asking any favor, nor do I mean to make any demands. Not that I scruple your readiness to do me any reasonable favor, should I request it ; but with respect to my expenses, I would have you regard equity alone, and act as your own integrity shall determine you. Perhaps you will think them extravagant, or if not, yet that you ought not to defray them wholly. Judge ye what is right and settle the affair accordingly. Betwixt you and me there shall be no contention.

“ Such necessary family expenses as I am able to recollect and account for, since my return to preach with you in September, 1777, amount to - - - - - £1524. 0. 0

“ I have received of your treasurers, Mr. Rand and Mr. Woodbridge, by taxation and subscription, - £441. 4. 2

“ By private donations, of which I have kept a scrupulous account, estimating them as justly as I could, I received, - - - - - 432 16. 0
 ----- 874. 0. 2

Your most affectionate, humble servant,

ASA DUNBAR.

April 23, 1779.

The society more than complied with Mr. Dunbar's request, by voting him seven hundred pounds.

As little seems to be known among us of this estimable man and minister, we have taken some pains to ascertain his history after he left Salem. From the church records it appears that he was recommended, in 1786, to the church in Keene, under the care of Rev. Aaron Hall.

After his dismissal from the ministry, Mr. Dunbar studied law, and settled in the profession at Keene, N. H., where he was known as the honest lawyer, and greatly respected. He died in Keene, as appears by the records of that town, on the 22d of June, 1787, (not 1788, as Dr Bentley states), and was buried from the meeting house, Rev. Mr. Hall preaching his funeral sermon, and giving him a high character.

Mr. Felt observes of Mr. Dunbar, that when settled here he belonged to Weston, and married Mary Jones, of the same place, 1772. By the church records it appears that at his ordination he came recommended from the church of the late Rev. Dr. Gay, of Hingham. His places of residence, as well as the members of his family, may be conceived from the following extract from the Town records of Keene.

“Dunbar Asa :

“Polly, daughter of Asa Dunbar and Mary his wife, born in Salem, Nov. 24, 1773. William, their son, born at Weston, Sept. 28, 1776. Charles Jones, their son, born at Harvard, Feb. 28, 1780. Sophia, their daughter, born at Harvard, July 19, 1781. Louisa, their daughter, born at Keene, May 11, 1785. Cynthia, their daughter, born at Keene, May 22, 1787. William Dunbar, son of Asa and Mary his wife, died at Harvard, July, 1779,—buried at Lancaster.” Mrs Dunbar survived her husband, and was married to a Mr. Minot, of Concord, Mass.

Dr. Bentley, who must have known Mr. Dunbar well, says : “He was a man of genius.”

XIII.

REV. JOHN PRINCE, LL. D.

1779 to 1836.

Dr. Prince was born in Boston, July 22, 1751, and graduated at Harvard College in 1776.

“Mr. John Prince was ordained to the pastoral care of the First Church in Salem, Nov. 10th, 1779. The Rev. Mr. Payson made the first prayer, the Rev. Mr. Williams preached from Luke 2:14; the Rev. Mr. Howard prayed before the charge; the Rev. Mr. Diman gave the charge; the Rev. Mr. Willard prayed, and the Rev. Mr. Barnard gave the right hand of fellowship.”

The sermon, by Mr. Williams, of Bradford, (afterwards professor at Cambridge,) was published. To the people he says : “No church can be under stronger obligations than you are to preserve the religion of Jesus pure and undefiled. Here those good men who came into this part of America for the sake of religion, formed *the first church*. We reverence their memories.”

In 1817, a legacy of \$3000 was received from the late Charles Henry Orne, merchant, a worthy member of the church, which, when accumulated to \$5000, was to form a permanent fund for the support of the settled minister of the First Church. From accumulation and subscriptions, the fund has increased to nearly \$8000. Upon receiving this legacy, the Proprietors of the First Church became incorporated by the name of the “First Congregational Society in Salem.”

Here may be gratefully noticed another benefactor and most worthy member of the First Church. The late Mehitable Higginson, the sixth in descent from the first minister, and the last in Salem to bear that venerated name, was an honor to her ancestry and her sex. As

the teacher of successive generations of children she was a blessing to the church and the town, exhibiting through life an example of exalted female excellence. She left at her death a lasting memorial of her interest in the Society of the First Church by a generous bequest; also providing that a legacy of five hundred dollars given to the Salem Athenæum on certain conditions, should, "in case of the non-fulfilment of said conditions go to the use of the Ministerial Fund of the First Congregational Society in Salem."*

In February 1824, at a meeting of the First Congregational Society, in Salem, called for the purpose, it was voted, that it was expedient to settle a colleague; and that the salary of Dr. Prince, should be continued to him if a colleague was settled. Rev. Henry Coleman, having preached as a candidate, was earnestly desired by a considerable portion of the Society. A majority, however, not being in favor of his settlement, his adherents seceded from the First Church, in 1824, and built for him the house in Barton Square; and he was installed as their minister, Feb. 25, 1825,—Mr. Upham having been recently ordained the colleague of Dr. Prince. This secession made the fourth religious society, in Salem, formed from the First, in a little more than one hundred years.

Dr. Prince lived in Christian union and brotherly love, for more than thirty years of his ministry, with Dr. Barnard of the North Church, and preached his funeral sermon, which is a beautiful memorial of their mutual friendship. He was also happy in his young colleague, who by his devoted attentions cheered and brightened his latter days, and paid a just and eloquent tribute to his memory, in a discourse preached at his funeral, which was published, and may be referred to for a full and clear view of Dr. Prince's merits as a philosopher, and his character as a Christian divine. We cannot forbear to take from it a sentence or two, showing the beautiful relation which the venerable minister and his faithful people bore to each other.

After speaking of the steadfast kindness of his people, and observing that for twelve years they had "released him from labors," and yet "continued to him an unabated support;" the author adds:

* It may here be noted that in the old church book of records we find, (together with an "account of the plate," &c.), the following: "1718, belonging to the First Church of Salem, money which was given by the Honourable Benjamin Browne, Esq. 1708, and some part given by the Honourable Wm. Browne Esq. 1716; to be let out to interest; the interest to be improved towards providing for the Lord's Table. The whole now let out at interest."

“Your late venerable pastor has himself attested to your goodness and faithfulness to him. On his death bed he bore a testimony in your favor which will not and cannot ever be forgotten by you or your successors. He has bequeathed a munificent donation of nearly 450 invaluable books, selected with the greatest care, and constituting a theological library such as few clergymen possess, for the perpetual use of your ministers.” It is then stated that the will providing for the donation had been executed some years, and that just before his death Dr. Prince called for the catalogue containing the titles of the books, and dictated, in Mr. Upham’s presence, the following words to be written on the catalogue over his signature: “Sensible of the kindness of my people through my long ministry and life, I bequeath these books as a lasting memorial of my affectionate gratitude.”

Dr. Prince died on the 7th of June, 1836, aged very nearly 85 years. He was twice married. Mary Bailey, of Boston, was his first wife, and the mother of his children. His second wife was Mrs. Mille Waldo, who survived him. His eldest son, John, a graduate of Harvard College, class of 1800, was a lawyer, and the late Clerk of the Judicial Courts in the County of Essex.

The eminent character of Dr. Prince is well known. He possessed the spirit of a true philosopher, and a true Christian, and was alike distinguished for his mechanical ingenuity, his attainments in natural science, in theological and general learning,—for his various genius and taste, his ardent love of nature and of art,—his single heartedness and truly Christian temper, and for his amiable and generous disposition, especially as manifested in the gratuitous diffusion of his scientific discoveries and improvements, and in imparting his rare knowledge, at all times, for the gratification and entertainment of others. His character will long be remembered with sincere admiration.

XIV.

REV. CHARLES WENTWORTH UPHAM.

1824 to 1844.

Mr. Charles W. Upham, son of the Hon. Joshua Upham, formerly of Massachusetts, and a graduate of Harvard College in the class of 1763, was born at St. John, New Brunswick, May 4, 1802. He received his education at Harvard College, and took his first degree in 1821. He was a graduate of the Theological School in Cambridge, in the class of 1824.

Having accepted an invitation to settle as colleague pastor with the Rev. Dr. Prince, Mr. Upham was ordained Dec. 8, 1824. The record, (made by the senior pastor,) gives a full account of his ordination, substantially as follows: The ecclesiastical council was organized by choosing Rev. Dr. Thayer, of Lancaster, moderator, and Rev. Mr. Walker, of Charlestown, scribe. The council consisted of the following churches, represented by the Pastors and Delegates, viz: Cambridge University Church, Rev. Drs. Kirkland and Ware—delegate, Mr. Saml. A. Eliot; Cambridge Church, Dr. Holmes—delegate, Dr. Hedge; Boston, West Church, Dr. Lowell, Mr. Phineas Upham, Mr. John Fairfield; Federal street Church, Dr. Channing, Rev. Mr. Gannett—delegate, Dea. S. Greele; North Church, Rev. Mr. Parkman; Lancaster, Dr. Thayer; Charlestown, new church, Rev. Mr. Walker—delegate, Mr. Isaac Blanchard; Chelsea, Dr. Tuckerman—delegate, Mr. David Floyd; Lynn, 2d church, Rev. Mr. Green—delegate, Col. A. Brimblecom; Marblehead, Rev. Mr. Bartlett,—delegate, Hon. Nathl. Hooper; Salem, North Church, Rev. Mr. Brazer—delegates, Dr. Holyoke, Dea. Holman, Dea. Sanderson; East Church, Rev. Mr. Flint—delegate, Dea. James Brown; Beverly, Rev. Dr. Abbot—delegates, Hon. Robert Rantoul, Mr. Thomas Davis, Mr. Aug. Choate; Springfield, Rev. Mr. Peabody—delegate, Mr. Saml. Orne.

After the usual preliminary proceedings, the candidate read before the council a statement of his views of religion and the sacred office. The council then appointed the Rev. Mr. Brazer to offer the fellowship of the churches, and concurred in the appointments previously made by the Society and senior pastor, viz: Rev. Dr. Channing, to make the introductory prayer; Rev. President Kirkland, to preach the sermon; Rev. Dr. Lowell, to make the ordaining prayer; Rev. Dr. Thayer, to give the charge; Rev. Mr. Flint to address the Society. The council then proceeded to the meeting house, where the services were performed with great ability and solemnity, and high approbation of a numerous congregation.

Allusion has already been made to the Dedication sermon and the 2d Century Lecture, preached by Mr. Upham. He also published, at an early period of his ministry, "Letters on the Logos," the "Life of Sir Henry Vane," and "Lectures on Witchcraft,"—with various other interesting publications.

Mr. Upham resigned his pastoral office in December, 1844, from regard to his health, as did his predecessor, Mr. Dunbar;—the only instances of resignation among the ministers of the First Church. Upon accepting this resignation, the society presented Mr. Upham with

the sum of fifteen hundred dollars. In his excellent farewell address, in writing, which was entered upon the records of the Society, he warmly expresses "the gratification with which he contemplated their unanimity, kindness and generosity,"—concluding "with the most fervent wishes and prayers for the welfare of the Society collectively and individually, and with the liveliest sensibility in the remembrance of all their kindness, fidelity and sympathy."

Mr. Upham was soon called into public life. He has been a Representative of Salem in the General Court, and a Senator from the County of Essex. He is now a member of the Congress of the United States. He has also been Mayor of the city of Salem.

To preserve the facts in this connection, the following is added. Soon after his ordination, Mr. Upham married Ann, daughter of the late Rev. Dr. Holmes, of Cambridge. They have living, three sons, and one daughter: The eldest son has graduated at Harvard College and is now a member of the Law School. The next son is an undergraduate in the same college.

XV.

REV. THOMAS TREADWELL STONE.

1846 TO 1852.

Mr. Stone was born at Waterford, Me., Feb. 9, 1801, and was educated at Bowdoin College, taking his first degree in 1820. He was ordained in the ministry at Andover, Me., Sept. 8, 1824, and remained there till Sept. 1830, when he became preceptor of Bridgton Academy, where he continued two years. He resumed the ministry, and was installed at East Machias, on the 15th of May, 1833. In June, 1846, he was chosen Pastor of the First Congregational Society in Salem, and installed on the 12th of July following.

The mode of Mr. Stone's induction into the pastoral office, on this occasion, was somewhat peculiar. No invitations were given to the pastors of sister churches to be present. The ceremony of installation took place on Sunday morning, at the usual hour of meeting for worship, in the manner prescribed by the Committee of the Society, and in designed imitation of ancient practice. Dr. George Choate, in behalf of the Committee, standing together with Mr. Stone, in front of the pulpit, made an address, first to the congregation, then to the Pastor elect, combining in the latter both a right hand of fellowship, and a charge. The pastor responded in suitable terms. He was then "tak-

en by the hand, and conducted into the pulpit. Then followed an anthem ; next, an appropriate prayer by Mr. Stone, and a discourse adapted to the occasion."

The vote of invitation to Mr. Stone contained a peculiar provision, viz :—"That either party may terminate the contract by giving to the other party six months notice of an intention or wish so to do." The Society, on the 23d of August, 1851, by a major vote, gave such notice to Mr. Stone, and his ministry terminated accordingly in February, 1852.

Mr. Stone had greatly endeared himself to many persons in the society ; and all, it is believed, entertained for him a high respect, and the sincerest good wishes. One thousand dollars was contributed at once by members of the society, and cordially presented to him upon the close of his ministerial connection with them.

Mr. Stone is again settled in the ministry at Bolton. In January, 1825, Mr. Stone married Laura, daughter of the late Dr. Silvanus Poor, of said Andover. They have living six sons and two daughters. Of the four elder sons, the first is an agriculturist ; the second, having graduated at Bowdoin College, is now a member of the Theological School, in Cambridge ; the third is a medical student, and the last is preparing himself to become an architect.

XVI.

REV. GEORGE WARE BRIGGS.

1853.

Mr. Briggs was born at Little Compton, R. I., April 8th, 1810, and was educated at Brown University, taking his first degree in 1825. He graduated at the Theological School in Cambridge, with the class of 1834 ; and was settled in the ministry at Fall River, Sept. 24, 1834. He was installed at Plymouth, Jan. 3, 1838, as colleague Pastor with the Rev. Dr. Kendall.

On the 4th of August, 1852, he was duly invited to settle as Pastor of the First Congregational Society in Salem, but was providentially prevented at that time from accepting the invitation. The committee, appointed to confer with him, reported his negative answer, together with the reason assigned for it, to the Society, at a full meeting called for the purpose, including proprietors and occupants of pews, members of the church and the congregation, on the 18th of December, 1852. "Whereupon, it appearing that the assigned reason no lon-

ger existed, the meeting, by a unanimous vote, directed the committee to apply to Mr. Briggs for a renewed answer."* Application was accordingly made, and an affirmative answer duly received. The installation of Mr. Briggs took place on the 6th of January, 1853. Invitations were extended to various clergymen in the vicinity, to be present on the occasion, but no ecclesiastical council was organized. The services in the church were as follows :

Introductory prayer, by Rev. William O. White, of Keene, N. H.; Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. O. B. Frothingham, of Salem; Sermon, by Rev. John H. Morison, of Milton; Ordaining Prayer, by Rev. Dr. Thompson, of Salem; Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. Dr. Flint, of Salem; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Dexter Clapp, of Salem; Benediction by the Pastor.

We have thus given an account of every ordination or installation, in the First Church, as found in its records, or elsewhere. It does not appear that any sermon was preached at the induction of either of the first five ministers. At the three next, it was preached by the ministers themselves,—Higginson, Noyes, Curwin,—and at all since, except the fifteenth, by a pastor of some other church. The right hand of fellowship appears to have formed a part of the services from the beginning, but no charge is noted till the ordination of Mr. Curwin, when it was given by "the teacher," Mr. Noyes. There is no instance to be found of any examination of the candidate as to his doctrinal views, and but one in which they were spontaneously given. In this case, (the fourteenth,) there was the most complete observance of ecclesiastical form and etiquette, yet in the next, (the fifteenth,) they were wholly disregarded. The various manner of introducing the ministers of the First Church, may be taken as an illustration of the spirit of Christian liberty, which actuated the founders. Through every variety of form, and all diversities of sentiment, the church has been steadfast to its first principles. The only contentious controversy with a minister that occurs in its history sprung from a disposition on his part, believed to be inconsistent with these principles and the rights of the church.

With a single exception, all the ministers were settled for life. No one of them ever resigned his office here to preach elsewhere. All were liberally educated; the first five at one of the English Universities; the sixth without any university; the next eight at Harvard; the

* NATHANIEL RUSSELL, Esq., of Plymouth, (the venerable parent of Mrs. B.) who was ill in August, died on the 25th of October last, in the 84th year of his age.

fifteenth at Bowdoin, and the present pastor at Brown University. Of the fifteen whose ministry has closed, one was banished by the civil authorities, and one sent on a foreign mission—both against the wishes of their people; one was excluded from the pulpit, two resigned, and the ministry of one was terminated by its own special constitution. The other nine died in their pastoral charge. In no case has the salary of a minister been diminished upon settling a colleague with him.

Our purpose has been to give facts, not comments. The facts, though brief, sufficiently show how learned, able and faithful were the ministers, and how just and generous the people have been to them;—and also, we may add, to their seceding brethren, who, at different periods, went from them to form other churches.

We find no mention of any council before the ordination of Mr. Fisk, in 1718. The free election of a minister being conclusive, it would hardly seem consistent to submit it to any ecclesiastical authority. The Society, accordingly, “voted that the installation of the Rev. Mr. Briggs, should be consecrated by public religious services, in the First Church, consisting of a sermon, right hand of fellowship, reading of the scriptures, prayers, and appropriate music.”

With the auspicious settlement of Mr. Briggs, our desultory notices are brought to a close. We rejoice most devoutly in the auspices under which his ministry commences. May the blessing of God rest upon it, and make it more abundant in “the fruit of the spirit,—love, joy, peace,”—than any that has gone before it.

It is hoped that these notices, hastily prepared and imperfect as they are, will be acceptable to the society, to which they relate, and serve to inspire a more lively interest in the prosperity and perpetuity of the First Church, and a deeper attachment to the principles upon which it is founded.

ESTO PERPETUA !

INDEX.

	PAGE.
FIRST CHURCH, founded. Higginson and Skelton elected. Ordained. Principles. Covenant. Deacons Orne and Gott. Deacons' Marsh. Teaching Elders. Ruling Elders	33—5
I. FRANCIS HIGGINSON. Teacher. "The father and pattern of the New England clergy."	36
II. SAMUEL SKELTON. Pastor. Pastors and Teachers.	37
III. ROGER WILLIAMS. Teacher. Sir Edw. Coke. Peculiar opinions. Banished. Founder of R. I. J. Q. Adams. Dr Elton.	38
IV. HUGH PETERS. Pastor. In London. In Holland. In Salem. Public services. John Fisk, assistant minister Success and fate in England. Winthrop's, Felt's and Upham's opinion of his character.	40
V. EDWARD NORRIS. Teacher. Influence in the Colony. Letter to General Court. Liberal views and character. Last minister of first generation.	42
VI. JOHN HIGGINSON. Pastor. Fuller church records begin. Call, answer, ordination. Early votes. Quakers. Studied with Hooker at Hartford. Settled at Guilford. Cotton Mather's funeral sermon at his death.	44
VII. NICHOLAS NOYES. Teacher. (Ed. H. C.) Minister at Had-dam. Ordination. Learning. Character. Witchcraft delusion. (Page 48, line 20, for Hunton read Dunton.)	47
VIII. GEORGE CURWIN. Pastor. (H. C.) Ordination. Charge by "the Teacher." Sons, Samuel and George.	48
IX. SAMUEL FISK. Pastor. (H. C.) Second Church formed from the First. Fierce contest. Excluded from the pulpit. Seceders with Mr. Fisk form the Third Church.	49
X. JOHN SPARHAWK. Pastor. (H. C.) "Ancient principles of the First Church." Reading the Scriptures part of public worship. Dr. Holyoke.	50
XI. THOMAS BARNARD. Pastor. (H. C.) Minister at Newbury. Lawyer. Then minister again. Installation. Judge Lindall's legacy. Division of plate, &c. with Third church. Deacons' Marsh. On choice of Mr. Dunbar, seceders with Thomas Barnard, jr., form the North Society.	52
XII. ASA DUNBAR. Pastor. (H. C.) Resigns. Letter to the church. The "honest lawyer," at Keene.	53
XIII. JOHN PRINCE, LL. D. Pastor. (H. C.) C. H. Orne's Fund Miss Higginson's bequest. Seceders with Rev. H. Colman form Independent church. Dr. Barnard and Dr P. Mr. Upham's funeral sermon. Dr. P.'s donation of books. Dr. P.'s character.	55
XIV. CHARLES WENTWORTH UPHAM. Pastor. (H. C.)	57
XV. THOMAS TREADWELL STONE Pastor. (Bowdoin.)	59
XVI. GEORGE WARE BRIGGS. Pastor. (Brown.)	60
Concluding remarks.	61

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06399 874 2

B.P.L. L. 100
JAN 20 1980

One
card; +
an

